

Underwater Archeology Unit to obtain a good understanding of both maritime activities within the state and existing bottom conditions in order to determine the potential for submerged cultural resources.

Underwater archeology throughout the country has also been struggling to find itself within the disciplines of history and anthropology and it is the theories and methodologies of these fields which will define future directions for preservation planning. Within the historical camp, there are in North Carolina two major foci. One is the history of shipbuilding and the history of vernacular design in particular, and the other, period research of vessels, harbors and associated maritime industry. Within anthropology, the work of Perry (an historian), Shomette, and Leone has given rise to a broader recognition of the values of integrated, underwater, maritime and economic documentation is explicating and confirming theories of material cultural expansion and the workings of the nascent American capitalism. Such studies promise to add much needed dynamic depth to maritime studies.

Assessment of Previous Research

The occasional bibliographies of archeological research papers held by the North Carolina Division of Archives and History (Bollinger 1982; Hargrove 1980, 1981; Myers 1984, 1985) provide a way to roughly gauge the amount of work carried out in the study area. Table 7 shows the number of entries by county for each volume from 1980 to 1985. Higher figures in early years reflect the backlog of papers to be cited at that time. When plotted (figure 4-2), the summary figures reveal some interesting and not surprising trends.

By far the heaviest coverage focuses on the more densely populated counties on the Pamlico and Neuse rivers. This is expected, given the amount of residential, commercial, and resort development around the urban areas of Morehead City, New Bern, Washington, and Bath. The same area has seen substantial human settlement through all aboriginal periods as well. A similar area of heavy coverage, though less so than in the case above, occurs along the lower Chowan River and the lower and middle stretches of the Roanoke River, related to the same factors described earlier. Three gaps or areas of minimal investigation can also be discerned: Pamlico County, the pocosin-dominated areas of Washington, Tyrrell, and Hyde counties, and the northeasternmost counties of Gates, Pasquotank, Camden, and Currituck. These sections, generally speaking, have low population densities and or extensive surface coverage of swamps, marsh, or pocosin.

A comparison of the site numbers for the northern and southern coastal counties (Table 3) points up the dramatic difference in numbers identified south of the Neuse River. This phenomenon is due to several factors. New Hanover County has been surveyed on a county-wide basis, while none but Hyde County in the north have been systematically covered, and in that case an atypically (for the coast) low site density has been identified, probably due to the small amount of land that is cultivable or habitable without some drainage efforts. The efforts of one indefatigable surveyor, Tucker Littleton, resulted in the identification of hundreds of sites in the vicinity of his home in Swansboro, thus tending to skew the chart of "normal" activity.